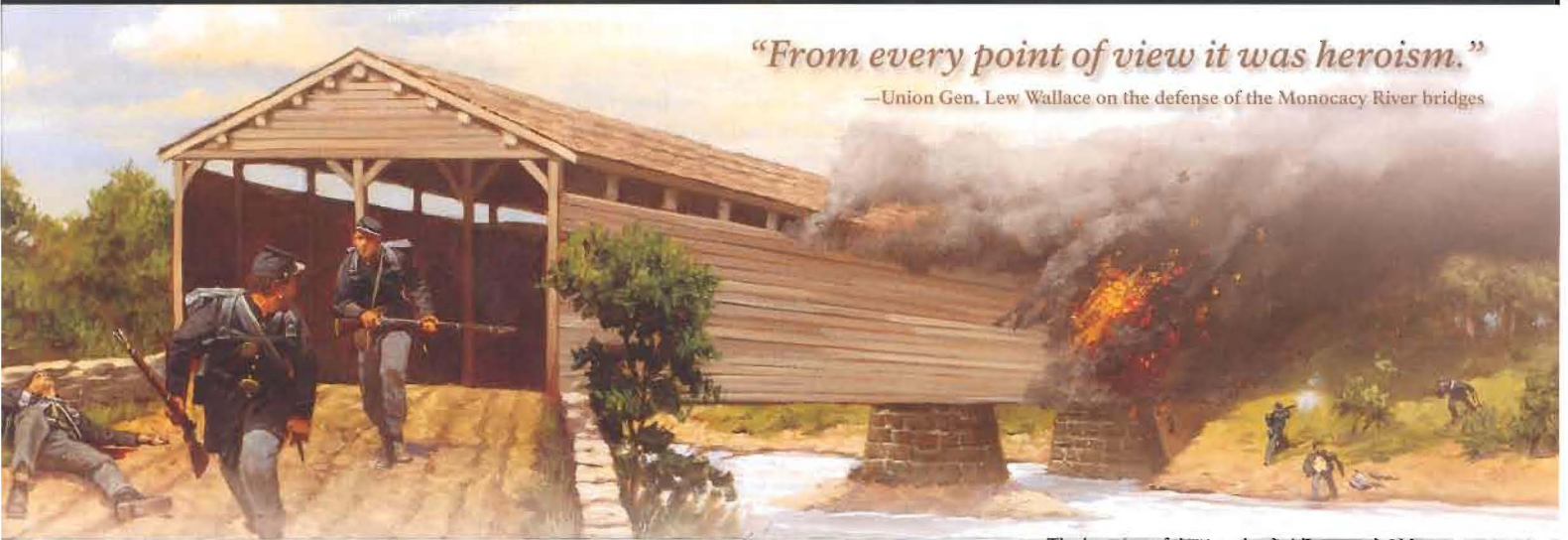


Monocacy

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Battlefield
Maryland



"From every point of view it was heroism."

—Union Gen. Lew Wallace on the defense of the Monocacy River bridges

The burning of the wooden bridge over the Monocacy.
NPS/KEITH ROCCO

The Battle that Saved Washington, D.C.

Monocacy National Battlefield preserves the site of a Civil War battle that occurred south of Frederick, Md., on July 9, 1864, during the third and final Confederate invasion of the North. Although less famous and smaller in scale than the nearby battles fought at Antietam and Gettysburg during the first two invasions, the Battle of Monocacy proved crucial as well. It delayed Confederate forces attempting to capture the nation's capital.

The Third Invasion of the North

By mid-1864, the tide of war had turned against the Confederacy. Its army in the West was being beaten back toward Atlanta, Ga. In the East, Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was forced to establish battle lines around Richmond and Petersburg, Va. To bolster Union forces besieging those cities, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant had removed thousands of troops from the ring of forts surrounding Washington, D.C., leaving the city lightly defended and a tempting target.

To relieve the pressure on his beleaguered army, Lee sent 15,000 troops under Lt. Gen. Jubal Early on a campaign to divert Union troops away from Petersburg. Early would head west into the Shenandoah Valley, then sweep north into Maryland. His goal: threaten or capture Washington, and if possible raid the prison at Point Lookout to free the thousands of Confederates held there. Lee also hoped this third incursion into the war-weary North would further destroy public support for the conflict.

Early's army reached Harpers Ferry, W. Va., on July 4. Crossing the Potomac River near Sharpsburg, Md., they headed east toward Frederick and the road to Washington.

Their movements did not go unnoticed. Railroad agents alerted the president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, John W. Garrett, who notified Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace, the Union commander in Baltimore. Wallace quickly assembled 2,800 troops, most of them new or short-term recruits without experience.

Unsure of Early's strength and whether the Confederates were headed to Baltimore or Washington, Wallace rushed his troops to Monocacy Junction, an important trade and transportation center and a logical point of defense for both cities. There, the Georgetown Pike to Washington and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad crossed the Monocacy River, as did the nearby National Road to Baltimore. By guarding all three bridges and several fords, Wallace hoped to delay Early until reinforcements arrived in Washington.

By dawn on July 9, the last of 3,000 Union veterans sent by Grant from Petersburg arrived, more than doubling Wallace's force. But the Confederates massing near Frederick still greatly outnumbered the Federals by almost three to one.



Lt. Gen. Jubal Early
He was one of Lee's most experienced commanders. Upon ending his invasion of Maryland, he told one of his officers: "Major, we haven't taken Washington, but we scared Abe Lincoln like hell!"

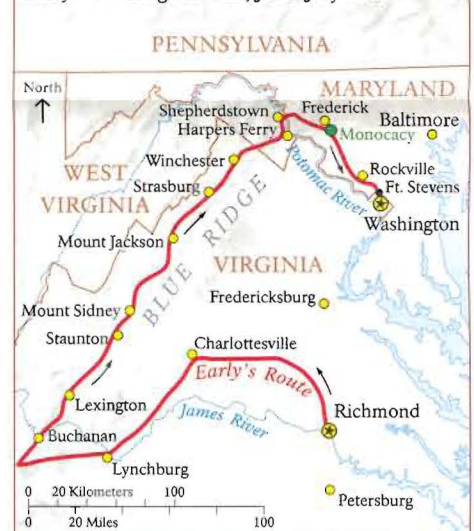
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace
Ulysses S. Grant said that Wallace's defeat at Monocacy contributed "a greater benefit to the cause than often falls to the lot of a commander of equal force to render by means of a victory."

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Early's Washington Raid, June-July 1864



The Armies Clash at Monocacy

On the morning of July 9, the advancing Confederates began attacking the Union troops defending the bridges over the Monocacy River. Determining that Early was headed toward Washington, Wallace had concentrated most of his men along the east side of the river at Monocacy Junction

Confederate artillery on the Best Farm fires on Union troops at the Battle of Monocacy, July 9, 1864.

NPS/KEITH ROCCO



and positioned a line of skirmishers along the railroad tracks on the west side.

The Confederates brought up their artillery and heavy fighting ensued around the Best Farm as they tested the Union defense. Early decided a direct frontal assault would be too costly. Instead, his cavalry found a place downstream where they could ford the river and attack the Union left flank. Alerted to the movement, Wallace shifted most of his troops onto the Thomas Farm to meet the assault.

Early's cavalry crossed the river at the Worthington-McKinney Ford, dismounted, formed ranks, and advanced across the fields of the Worthington Farm. Instead of springing a surprise attack, they walked into a well-concealed line of soldiers along the fence separating the Worthington and Thomas farms. Union rifle fire raked the opposing ranks, causing the Confederates to fall back.

Meanwhile, Wallace ordered his men to burn the wooden covered bridge on the Georgetown Pike to prevent the Confederates on his right from storming across the river. By doing so, he also cut off the best route of retreat for his skirmishers, still stubbornly holding their ground near the junction. He bolstered his left flank and shifted more of his troops to the Thomas Farm in preparation for a second assault.

The Confederate cavalry attacked again in mid-afternoon, pushing the Union soldiers back and capturing the Thomas House. But



MONOCACY AND THE MEDAL OF HONOR



Lt. George E. Davis



Corp. Alexander Scott

Union troops counterattacked and recaptured the house. On the Worthington Farm, a full Confederate division forded the river in late afternoon and launched a three-prong assault against the Union line.

The heaviest fighting of the day raged across the wheat and corn fields of the Thomas and Worthington farms, as the Confederates again pushed back the Federals. Across the river they also dislodged the Union skirmishers, forcing them to flee under fire across the railroad bridge.

Wallace could hold his position no longer. He ordered what was left of his small army to fall back past Gambrill Mill and retreat toward Baltimore. He left behind about 1,300 men dead, wounded, missing, or captured.

The Medal of Honor is the highest decoration for valor given by the United States Army and Navy. It was awarded twice at the Battle of Monocacy, both times to members of the 10th Regiment of Vermont Volunteers: Lt. George E. Davis, for defending the two bridge approaches at Monocacy Junction against repeated assaults by a larger force; and Corp. Alexander Scott, for saving the regiment's national flag from capture.



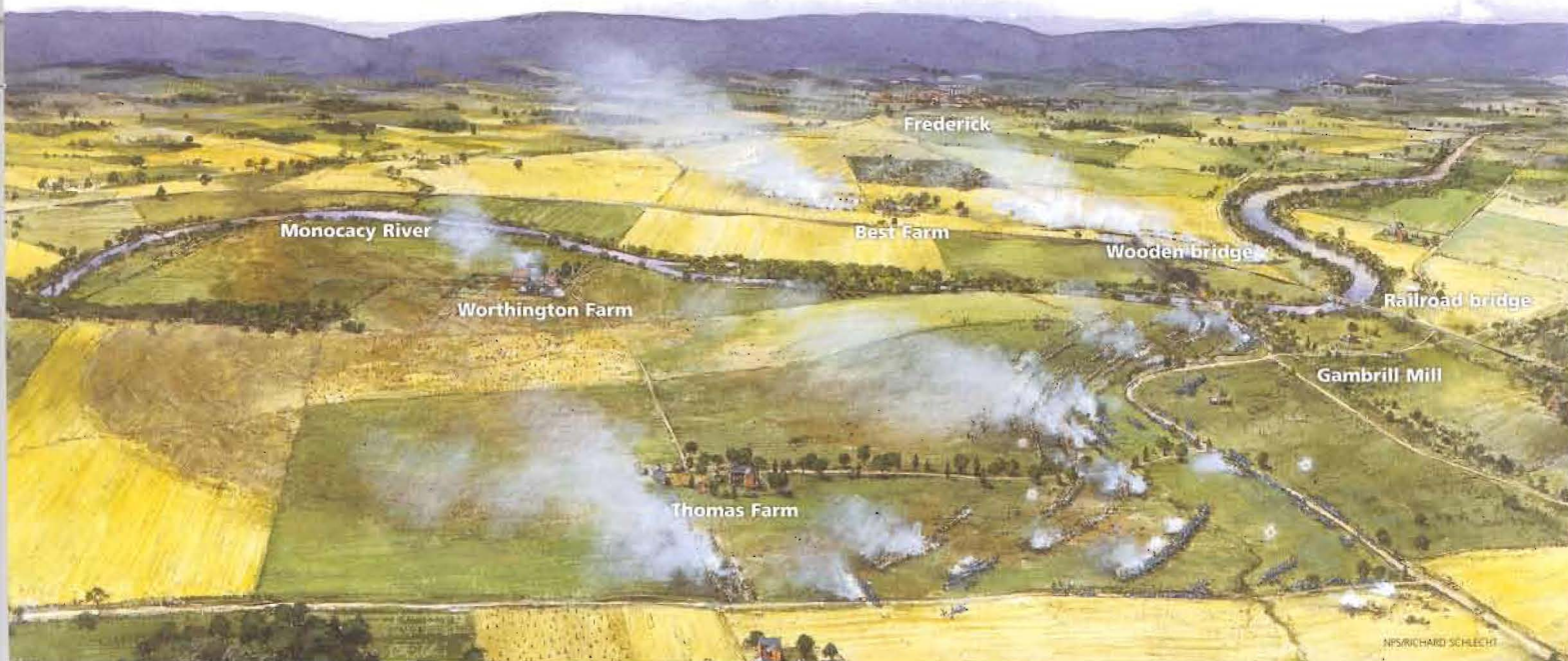
The Significance of the Battle

The exhausted Confederates encamped on the battlefield that night before resuming their march to Washington. The battle cost them as many as 900 men killed, wounded, missing, or captured, and a precious day of time. Late on July 11, two days after the Battle of Monocacy, they entered the District of Columbia and reached Fort Stevens in Northwest Washington. By then, two Union divisions rushed north by steamship

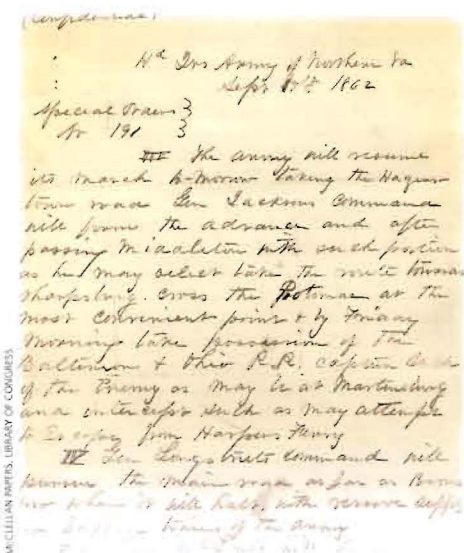
from Petersburg had streamed into the city and reinforced its defenses. Early's troops fired on Fort Stevens that afternoon, an attack that President Abraham Lincoln witnessed. But the opportunity to capture the city had been lost. The Confederate cavalry sent to liberate the prisoners at Point Lookout was recalled before reaching their destination, and on July 12, under the cover of darkness, Early began to withdraw

his army back into Virginia, ending the last Confederate invasion of the North.

At Monocacy, Wallace's small improvised army had held its ground against repeated assaults by a much larger, battle-hardened Confederate force, delaying their advance for one critical day. His troops had lost the battle, but they had saved Washington.



Monocacy Battlefield Then and Now



Lee's Lost Order

When Union Gen. George B. McClellan received this copy of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's Special Order No. 191

addressed to Gen. D. H. Hill, he exclaimed, "Here is a paper with which, if I cannot whip Bobby Lee, I will be willing to go home."

Two Other Significant Civil War Events took place on the Monocacy battlefield before and after the battle:

On September 13, 1862, Union soldiers made a surprising find on the Best Farm, where Confederates had earlier camped. They discovered an envelope containing several cigars and a copy of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's Special Order No. 191, which detailed specific movements of his army during the early days of the Maryland Campaign. Union Gen. George B. McClellan was ecstatic upon receiving the document, but failed to capitalize on it. His clash with Lee at Antietam on September 17, the bloodiest day of the war, ended in a draw—a missed opportunity to destroy the Confederate army. A historical marker on the Monocacy battlefield identifies Lee's headquarters site where Special Order No. 191 was prepared.

forage. The next day he placed Gen. Philip Sheridan in command of the Union army in the valley. Sheridan's assignment: destroy Jubal Early's forces and render the valley so desolate that "even a crow flying over the place would have to take his rations with him."



Soldier Encampments on the Battlefield

Both Union and Confederate armies camped in the area from time to time both before and after the battle. Archeological surveys have turned up many artifacts, including this inscribed canteen

spout belonging to Lt. Ambrose B. Hart of the 128th New York Infantry. Hart lost the spout during an 1864 encampment on the Best Farm. Artifacts like this are on display in the visitor center.

Touring The Battlefield

"Every man tried to do his best against great odds."

—Lt. M. J. Stearns, 106th New York Infantry

The self-guiding auto tour begins at the visitor center and covers about six miles, following Md. 355, Araby Church Road, and Baker Valley Road. **Be extremely careful of traffic as you drive this route and make stops.**

1 Best Farm

As Early's troops advanced south toward Washington on the morning of July 9, 1864, along the Georgetown Pike (now Md. 355), they met stiff resistance from Union skirmishers waiting along the railroad at Monocacy Junction a half mile away. The Confederates set up artillery at the Best Farm and opened

afternoon and drove the Federals from the field. Wallace's forces fell back past Gambrill Mill and retreated toward Baltimore. The Confederates had won the battle but lost a precious day in their advance on Washington.

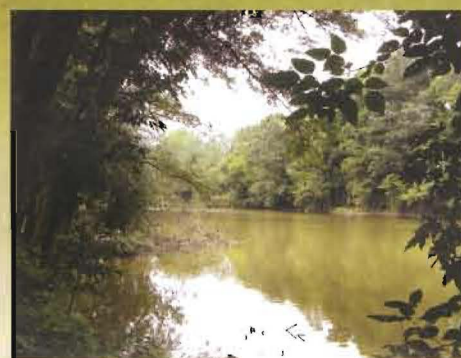
5 Gambrill Mill

Built in 1830, Gambrill Mill was run by an interior undershot water wheel. The mill could produce 60 barrels of flour a day and kept two coopers busy producing barrels for its products. During the battle, Union troops occupied the grounds and used the mill as a field hospital. Wallace later noted, "The place

Worthington House

Built in 1851, this house exemplifies the Federal-style type of residence found on many prosperous Frederick County farms. The Worthington family took shelter in the cellar during the fighting. Six-year-old Glenn Worthington

witnessed the action through a boarded up window and later wrote a book called *Fighting for Time*, encouraging Congress to establish a "National Military Park at the Battlefield of Monocacy, Maryland."



fire on the junction. Union artillery across the river responded, eventually igniting a fire in the Best barn.

2 Monocacy Junction

This area around the 14th New Jersey monument marks the approximate center of the Union skirmish line. About 350 soldiers guarded Monocacy Junction, where two B&O Railroad tracks converged and an iron railroad bridge and wooden covered bridge crossed the Monocacy River. As the battle unfolded, these skirmishers faced the main Confederate line; the main Union line lay across the river behind them.

Early decided to redirect most of his troops downstream rather than risk a direct frontal assault against the well-positioned Federals. Later in the morning, Wallace shifted most of his force to the left to counter that move and ordered the covered bridge burned in case the Confederates broke through the skirmish line. Although the burning bridge cut off their best avenue of retreat, the Union skirmishers held their ground throughout the day. They repulsed a second attack before a third and final assault forced them to flee across the open trestles of the railroad bridge.

3 Worthington Farm

Confederate cavalry crossed the Monocacy in mid-morning at the Worthington-McKinney Ford, then dismounted and formed for attack on the fields behind the Worthington House. As they marched toward the Thomas Farm, they ran into a well-concealed Union line positioned behind the fence separating the Worthington and Thomas farms. The Federals opened fire, driving the Confederates back. The Confederates occupied the area around the Worthington House and positioned a battery of cannon to bombard the Thomas House, which contained Union sharpshooters. They used the Worthington House and yard as a field hospital.

4 Thomas Farm

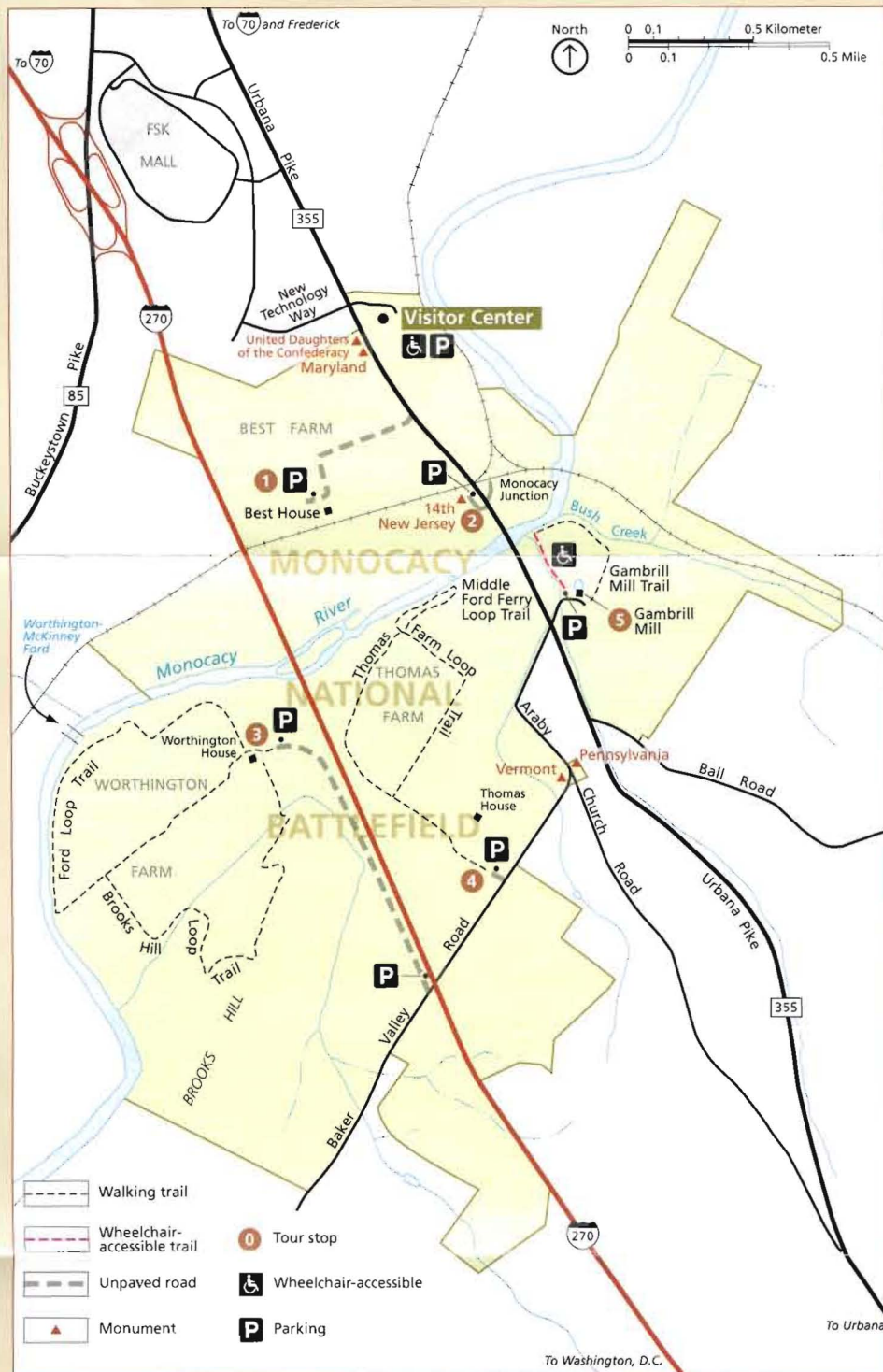
Caught between the two armies, the Thomas House became the focal point of the battle, as Confederates on the Worthington Farm and Union troops on the Thomas Farm faced off in the most furious fighting of the day. Confederate artillery pummeled the house with shells to drive off the Union sharpshooters. Throughout the afternoon, the house was captured and recaptured as the battle line moved back and forth across the Thomas Farm.

A final thrust by a full Confederate infantry division finally broke the Union line in the late

afternoon. The Confederates appeared well selected for the purpose, its one inconvenience being that it was under fire." When the Union forces retreated toward Baltimore, Confederate troops occupied the mill.

Ford, where Confederate cavalry crossed the Monocacy to attack the

Worthington and Thomas farms, can be seen from the Ford Loop Trail.



About Your Visit

Hours and Admission

The park is open during daylight hours only. The visitor center is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily all year. It is closed on Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. Admission is free. Group tours for 12 or more may be arranged in advance by calling 301-662-3515.

Visitor Center

The visitor center has an information desk, interpretive exhibits, and museum store. It is wheelchair-accessible.

Water and restrooms

are available only at the visitor center. The visitor center is also the starting point for a self-guiding auto tour of the battlefield.

Walking tour brochures

for trails at the Worthington Farm, Thomas Farm, and Gambrill Mill are available for sale at the visitor center or can be printed out from the park's web site. Except for part of the Gambrill Mill Trail, the trails are not wheelchair-accessible.

Safety and Regulations

Stay alert to all traffic. Not all areas of the park are open to the public. Most of the land is under agricultural permit, and some is private property. Please be respectful and stay on established trails. The park is trash free; you must take all trash with you. Relic hunting is prohibited. Camping, weapons, and alcohol are not permitted. Do not climb on monuments or cannons. Keep pets on a leash, and beware of wildlife and poisonous

plants. In an emergency, call 911 or NPS dispatch at 1-866-677-6677.

More Information

Monocacy National Battlefield
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301-662-3515
www.nps.gov/mono

Monocacy National Battlefield is one of over 390 areas in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs, visit www.nps.gov.

